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POLAR FOXGLOVE CULTIVATION YIELDS DIGITALIS

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Pechora, Komi ASSR

A recent report from the botanical station of the Pechora Clinical Hospital revealed an interesting series of experiments on the cultivation of foxglove in polar regions.

These experiments were started in 1946 when the first shipment of seeds of annual and perennial foxglove was received from the All-Union Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. Good, sunny growing weather lasted from July to August, when the scientists at the botanical gardens harvested 58 centers of leaves. It was interesting to note that many plants survived the winter under the snow, bloomed the following year, and bore fertile seed.

In 1947 and 1948, the seeds were planted directly into the outside soil, and results were most satisfactory. Samples of the Pechora foxglove were sent to the Chair of Pharmacology, Leningrad Sanitation Hygiene Institute, for a complete pharmacodynamic analysis.

Experiments conducted at Pechora Hospital confirmed the therapeutic value of the northern foxglove in actual clinical applications. It was administered to patients afflicted with various forms of hemodynamic disorders, rheumatism of the heart, compression of the heart, etc.

In most cases, the digitalis extracted from it acted as a cardiant, diuretic, and vagotropic stimulant. Its beneficial action was particularly noticeable in cases with acute decompensation of the heart complicated with peripheral and visceral edema. Digitalis administrations to patients afflicted with auricular flutter arrhythmia produced a rapid decrease in the pulse rate and a decrease in the tachyrrhythmia. In severe cases of decompensation of the heart accompanied by hepatomegalia and

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gastrointestinal reflex inhibition, very good results were obtained by microcysters of digitalis.

All tests have shown the value of the northern foxglove. Plans for 1949 call for additional study of its action, particularly with regard to study of the effectiveness of the polar foxglove with electrocardiographs, pulse rate, biochemical tests, and other functional diagnoses.

The botanical station is conducting tests to determine the frost resistance of these seeds in order to determine the possibility of sowing the foxglove in other regions of the Far North.

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